Gender and Leader Effects in the 2010 Australian Election

Abstract

The impact of voters' gender on leader evaluations in parliamentary systems has remained largely unexplored, while 'the question of whether voter bias exists toward female politicians remains unsettled' (Fulton 2012, 303). This paper uses Julia Gillard's historic candidacy in the 2012 Australian federal election to explore how voters evaluated Australia's first ever female prime minister, and to test the impact of their assessments on vote choice. We also examine whether Gillard's high profile candidacy affected women's levels of political interest, awareness and engagement, in what was until 2010 a largely 'man's game.' Our findings confirm that Gillard enjoyed a gender affinity effect in 2010 in terms of both leader evaluations and vote choice, while women's political engagement was significantly affected in several ways by the Gillard candidacy.

Keywords: gender; leader evaluations; parliamentary elections; Australia; women; voting

1. Introduction

The 2010 Australian federal election provided a rare opportunity to explore how voters in a parliamentary system evaluate a female prime minister and major party leader, and the effect of those estimations on their vote decision making and wider political perceptions and involvement. That the Australian Labor Party (ALP) had turned to a woman for electoral salvation and the novelty of a woman leading a major party combined to ensure that gender featured prominently in the 2010 election (Sawer 2012, 251). Because the election of women to high office is 'not just symbolically important' but may also 'mobilise and activate women in the electorate' (Electoral Commission 2004, 48) the 2010 election campaign can be seen as having the potential to promote heightened interest, awareness and engagement among women voters.

And yet, Julia Gillard's path to the prime ministership was controversial -- with potentially significant implications for the evaluations of leaders by women voters. Kevin Rudd's removal from the Labor leadership just eight weeks before the election was painted as a 'political assassination' (e.g. Blewett 2010) – a portrayal that may well have prompted divergent estimations of Gillard, given that fact that voters often have stereotypical views that handicap women seeking political office. Political leaders are traditionally judged against stereotypical masculine traits such as strength and competitiveness. Female leaders are expected to exhibit alternative traits such as compassion and honesty and can, by displaying strength, forcefulness or other 'masculine' qualities, pay an electoral price for transgressing traditional gender stereotypes (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b, 514; Kahn 1994).

In acting decisively, even ruthlessly, to wrest away the leadership, Gillard acted just as a male politician might be expected to. But in Australia, Eva Cox observes, a 'tough, competent woman, doing no more than any man would do, is still judged more harshly'. She suggests Gillard's removal of Rudd sat uncomfortably with 'widespread, still entrenched views that there is something unnatural about women with power' (Cox 2010). As Rudd had been extraordinarily popular for a time, there was, not surprisingly, considerable public misgiving surrounding his removal as Labor leader and prime minister. During the election campaign which followed, the available opinion poll evidence suggests that Gillard's popularity eroded dramatically. It is plausible to suggest that this fall might be attributed, at least in part, to the effectiveness of the Liberal tactic of exploiting disquiet surrounding Labor's 'assassination' of Rudd. But it must also be asked whether, as a woman, Gillard suffered electorally in 2010

because voters judged her competence to serve as prime minister using gender stereotypes that that would put her at an evaluative disadvantage.

Clearly an election involving Australia's first female prime minister offered a 'powerful symbolic moment' (Smith 2010). This link between gender and politics in the 2010 Australian federal election was exacerbated by the fact that Gillard's rival, Tony Abbott, was a 'hyper-masculine' Liberal Opposition Leader known for his 'action man' persona and for 'telling Australian women how to live their lives' (Sawer 2012, 251). Well before Labor changed leaders, commentators had suggested that Abbott's social conservatism posed problems for his 'attractiveness to women voters' (Murray 2009). When Labor turned to Gillard to head off the electoral threat which Abbott posed, pundits predictably asked whether gender would prove to be a decisive factor in the contest between them.

In the end, the 2010 election produced the first Australian 'hung parliament' since 1940 -- just 30,527 (two-party preferred) votes dividing the opposition and government parties in a ballot in which more than 12 million voted. With Gillard at the helm Labor survived, but as a minority government. In the context of this controversial and historic election, the question remains: what role did gender play in shaping voters' political attitudes, evaluations and vote decision-making?

2. Gender, Leader Evaluations and Electoral Effects

Researchers have long sought to establish the influence of a candidate's gender on the choices voters make. Among the effects that have emerged are several with special relevance to the Gillard candidacy in 2010, including those showing that culturally entrenched gender stereotypes handicap the efforts of women to win electoral support (e.g. Kahn 1994, Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a). Huddy and Terkildsen (1993b, 504), in this respect, report that voters tend to typecast female candidates as 'typical women – warm, gentle, kind and passive' while they perceive male candidates as 'typical men – tough, aggressive and assertive'. Similarly, Hayes and McAllister (1997, 8) show that women voters judge candidates with reference to such traits as being compassionate, caring and sensible, while men look to leaders who appear to be strong, assertive and able to get things done. Insofar as women are popularly regarded as nurturers and carers and imagined to have different, 'compassionate' behaviour traits and preferences, women who seek political office may be regarded as lacking credibility if the job is seen as demanding toughness and strength (Koch 1997).

Because masculine, instrumental traits are primarily employed by voters judging candidates for national office and feminine, expressive traits are not, Huddy and Terkildsen (1993b, 514) argue that female candidates who attempt to emphasize their warmth, honesty and compassion may well harm their electoral chances. Female politicians, then, face special problems in 'walking the tightrope of gender expectations,' particularly in the way they must combine masculine traits such as strength, and feminine traits such as compassion (Johnson 2010, 1). Those who transgress traditional gender traits and act forcefully risk being judged as 'unfeminine,' while those who resist these masculine traits may lose vital electoral support. It is a dilemma faced exclusively by women candidates.

Central in these findings is the fact that, because power and power-seeking are 'central to the constructs of agency and masculinity,' male candidates who are viewed as competitive and power seeking are not electorally disadvantaged. However, women candidates who are judged to be power-seekers, or to be guilty of self-promotion or competitiveness may suffer 'backlash effects' and be 'penalized for their violation of stereotypical expectations' (Okimoto and Brescoll 2010, 924. Also see Banducci 2002, 56 on this point). If most voters characterize the 'ideal leader' in terms of traits such as strength and leadership then, to be successful, female candidates may feel compelled to try to convince voters of their 'atypicality' by demonstrating that they possess these more nearly masculine traits and, thus, run the risk of voter backlash (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b, 520). Clearly, Julia Gillard's historic candidacy in 2010, premised as it was on her role in Rudd's removal, is an ideal opportunity to examine this essential quandary faced by women candidates.

Voter assessments of gender and leader qualifications potentially play a particular role in the Australian context. Its system of compulsory voting compels even the least interested members of the electorate to participate. Many of these voters allow fleeting glimpses of leaders on television to decide their vote (McAllister 1992, 188; Denemark 2002; Denemark 2005). They can judge candidates on a 'gut feeling' and an impression of candidates' overall traits and character (Koch 1997, 120), or what Rahn has termed 'summary assessments' of candidates' integrity and trustworthiness (1993, 188). If so, we contend that gender images and voter estimations of the candidate's overall character and persona will play an important role in shaping voters' choices (Banducci and Karp 2000, 816). In short, gender-based portrayals of the two leaders are likely to have played significant roles in electoral evaluations and vote choice in the 2010 Australian election, if not equally for all voters across the electorate.

A further gender effect involves women supporting a female candidate to express their gender identity as a social group, rather than as the product of an assessment of specific candidate qualifications. This is described as a 'gender affinity effect' and has been demonstrated more often in the American context than in 'Westminster-style parliamentary systems' which are 'more leader and party centred' (Goodyear-Grant and Croskill 2011, 224). Gerald Pomper proposed long ago, in his 'dependent voter' thesis, that voters cast their ballots on the basis of perceived social group membership (1975). 'Group consciousness,' according to this model, prompts voters to cast votes for candidates who reflect that identity. If so, then women may vote for a female candidate solely on the basis of gender affinity (Zipp and Plutzer 1985, 182). Candidate visibility and competitiveness are argued to be essential for prompting these effects among voters (Atkeson 2003, 1041-43). Significant gender affinity effects have been shown in US senatorial contests, irrespective of voters' partisan affinities (Plutzer and Zipp 1996, 42), though equivalent effects have not been shown in, for example, Canadian parliamentary elections, 'at least for candidates if not for party leaders' (Goodyear-Grant and Croskill 2011, 247). The gender affinity thesis has been investigated almost solely at the local and district level, and rarely examined in a high-profile, national parliamentary election where the leader commanding media attention is a female.[1]

We have seen that having a female candidate in the running for, or elected to, high office may serve to mobilise and activate women voters. The presence of a female candidate or leader, as a consequence, may have important effects on women voters' general political sensibilities, including political interest, knowledge, efficacy and awareness (Koch 1997, 125). Numerous studies have shown that women are normally less likely than men to discuss politics with friends and family, or to try to influence the vote choice of others (Atkeson 2003, 1041; De Vaus and McAllister 1989, 241; Koch 1997, 119). Karp and Banducci (2008, 106), using comparative data, consider whether the symbolism of women in elected office can reverse this and foster higher levels of mobilisation, political engagement and supportive political attitudes amongst women. Though they found insignificant effects in terms of voter turnout and these other forms of active electoral engagement, there were significant (non-electoral) effects on political attitudes toward the political process and democracy itself (Karp and Banducci 2008, 113-4).

[1] Banducci and Karp's study of Helen Clark, Kim Campbell, Margaret Thatcher and Cheryl Kernot is one of the rare exceptions of a study of the impact of female party leaders (2000, 818). Goodyear-Clark and Croskill's (2011) study of support for women candidates in the 2000 and 2004 Canadian elections is another.

Karp and Banducci (2008, 106) have noted women's traditional 'invisibility in the political realm'. Historically women have demonstrated lower levels of political knowledge than men, along with lower levels of internal political efficacy and interest in politics. This reflects their particular social and economic circumstances, including their exclusion from the workforce and the occupational status and limited economic independence that accompanies this. While these attitudinal patterns are often seen as rooted in traditional social realities, Koch (1997, 119) has shown that they have remained despite controlling for generational effects and for the level of individuals' education. Women continue to have a very different experience arising from the intersection of paid and unpaid work. But there is evidence detailing change in 'traditional sex roles in the home and family, the expansion of equal opportunities for women in higher education and the paid workforce, and rising numbers of women entering the professions and management' (Electoral Commission 2004, 12), and of the erosion of various distinctive political attitudes as a consequence (see Banducci and Karp 2000, 816; Studlar, McAllister and Hayes, 1998; Renfrow 1994, 119). Nonetheless, many women may well still retain distinguishing attitudes toward politics and the political system as a legacy of their erstwhile marginalisation and the ongoing domination by men of the national political stage (Sapiro 1983). Here, then, the presence of female candidates is seen as prompting not an electoral effect *per se*, but a new psychological engagement. Women occupying, and contesting public office signal that politics is no longer dominated by men (Karp and Banducci 2008, 106, Electoral Commission 2004, 24). As a consequence, it is argued, women who see a political contest involving a high-profile female candidate may find the political process less alienating. In turn, this can be expected to fuel higher levels of political interest, knowledge and engagement. Julia Gillard's 2010 bid to retain the prime ministership provides an opportunity to analyze these gender effects.

All told then, the literature suggests there are a number of aspects of gender effects that might be anticipated in an election where a woman achieves prominence as the leader of a major party, such as Julia Gillard. These include effects on voters' vote choice, gender identity, leader evaluations and political attitudes, all of which we explore here in the context of the 2010 Australian federal election.

3. Gender and Electoral Effects in Australia

In western democracies party loyalties are eroding. Arguably this is freeing more voters to decide their votes on short-term factors, especially the appeal of leaders and issues at stake in a given election (Wattenberg 1991). Yet the analysis of leader effects in parliamentary elections is uncommon, and the investigation of the impact of female leaders on voters' preferences rarer

still (Plutzer and Zipp 1996, 32). Worldwide, women make up only small proportion of party leaders (Banducci 2002, 50) -- the paucity of research into gender and leader effects reflecting, at least in part, that fact that there have been relatively few female prime ministers.

Women now play a significant part within Australia's political parties, parliaments and lobbies. But this is a comparatively recent development. As recently as the 1977 election no women at all were returned to the House of Representatives. Kelley and McAllister (1983, 366) note that, until 1980 when three women were elected to the House, no more than two women had ever sat together in that chamber. Not surprisingly then, little research has been conducted on gender and candidate evaluations in Australia. A few researchers have sought to establish whether women standing for seats in the House of Representatives face obstacles that men do not (e.g. Kelley and McAllister 1983; Studlar and McAllister 1991).

The difficulty with attempting to establish whether or not the sex of a candidate is politically significant in Australia is that individual candidates in local districts lack visibility. Historically this invisibility reflected the depth of party loyalties amongst Australia's electorate (Aitkin 1982; McAllister 1992). More recently, as the number of voters with weak partisan affinities has increased (Marks 1993; McAllister 2011, 41-3) election campaigns have become quasi-presidential contests in which individual candidates play little part and go largely unnoticed (Bean and Mughan 1989; McAllister 1992; Denemark, Ward and Bean 2007). Banducci and Karp suggest that we can 'expect to see greater gender effects in elections where the party leader is the focus of the campaign' (Banducci and Karp 2000, 826). This is the case, given both the larger public profile of a national leader and the greater salience of their gender (Banducci and Karp 2000, 840). Hence, any appreciable influence of gender on electoral behaviour is likely to be apparent only in a campaign in which a woman plays a prominent part.

Until 2010 no major Australian party had selected a woman as national leader. In 1986 the Australian Democrats became the first party in the national parliament to appoint a woman to this role. Three other women subsequently followed in Janine Haines' footsteps.[2] While there is evidence showing that, in the 1996 election, women voters more so than men favourably rated the then-Democrat leader, Senator Cheryl Kernot, and that she attracted a greater vote among women (Banducci and Karp 2000, 826). However this is not a convincing demonstration of an Australian gender affinity effect. As a minor party the Democrats focused on the Senate and

[2] Cheryl Kernot led the Australian Democrats from 1993 to 1997, when she resigned to join the Australian Labor Party, and was succeeded as leader by Meg Lees (1997-2001) and then by Natasha Stott Despoja (2001-2002).

fielded relatively few House of Representatives candidates. Moreover, as did Kernot and the Democrats, minor parties also attract little media attention (Denemark, Ward and Bean 2007, 96). For want of a female leader at the head of major and genuinely national party there has previously been no substantive Australian study to isolate any gender affinity effect, while the larger implications of this important connection between female leaders and voters' political attitudes have been 'all but ignored' (Hayes and McAllister 1997, 4).

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Leaders in parliamentary elections attract particular attention. Most are men. The involvement of women in this role has the potential to have a significant impact upon the broader political attitudes of voters, as well as their vote choice on election day. This section of the paper draws upon survey data from the 2010 Australian federal election study (McAllister et al. 2011).[3] It explores the gender distinctiveness of political attitudes, as well as the impact of the Gillard candidacy on voters' political interest, efficacy and engagement, before turning to voters' evaluations of Gillard and the effects of these assessments on vote choice.

The conventional orthodoxy regarding gender and political attitudes is that women have lower levels of political interest, efficacy and knowledge than their male counterparts (De Vaus and McAllister 1989, 241). Though research shows a marked increase in the involvement of women in direct forms of electoral engagement such as attending political rallies and protests, the majority of women nonetheless continue to be less politically informed, efficacious, and less likely to be interested in political campaigns, to discuss politics with others, or to attempt to influence another person's vote choice (Atkeson 2003, 1041; Karp and Banducci 2008, 105-6). At the root of these attitudinal differences, a number of studies have suggested, is the fact that men's and women's psychological engagement in the political process is fundamentally different. Women often feel they are less qualified to understand political issues and to express their opinions about politics generally (Koch 1997, 119).

Despite their propensity to see politics differently from men, the recent emergence of prominent female candidates and leaders has provided women with a 'powerful symbolic cue that politics

[3] The 2010 Australian Election Study data file was made available through the Australian Social Science Data Archive, Canberra. The authors are solely responsible for the analysis and interpretation of the data herein. This survey data set was selected for use in this paper, given the variety of measures it affords for specifying our multivariate models, discussed below. Published opinion polls, though of significant value in reporting voters' preferences at the time, do not have the breadth of attitudinal measures required to test various tenets in gender gap theory.

"is not just a man's game"' (Karp and Banducci 2008, 106). If this is a development capable of promoting greater political interest, involvement and awareness amongst women voters, then in the Australian case Gillard's prominence as the first-ever female prime minister and major party leader can be expected to have had a significant political impact. This is most likely to be evident in increased levels of women's political interest and engagement – if not in terms of mobilization (given Australia's virtually universal turnout, due to its system of compulsory voting) then in the extent to which women engage with the electoral contest and have confidence in the nation's political processes more generally.

Voters have been argued to utilise distinctive traits in judging male and female political leaders and their performance – traits that echo stereotypes about male and female capabilities generally. But these individual judgements must be seen as occurring within a more complex socio-political context, controls for which must be included in any multivariate model that seeks to isolate leader evaluations and gender as key elements in political attitudes and electoral decision making. These are sketched here by way of specifying the models to be tested in the four tables, below. Studlar, McAllister and Hayes (1998, 782) argue that a number of studies have shown the electoral gender gap as influenced by two broad groups of factors, and the 'residual' influence of the individual's socialisation and adoption of 'gender roles'. The first group, 'social structural' influences (such as education, social class, occupation and religious practices), are factors that have historically explained the gender gap as the product of men's and women's religious, socio-economic and occupational distinctiveness. Women's historical conservatism and support for right-of-centre parties has been shown in a number of studies to have been sustained by differences in these sorts of factors, while the more recent decline of the gender gap is attributed to the erosion of these differences in men's and women's social structural realities (see, for example, deVaus and McAllister 1989; Hayes and McAllister 1997). To control for these influences, the multivariate models below include measures for the respondent's level of education, employment status, union membership, church attendance, social class self-identification, and membership in the Catholic Church. Age is also included as a control variable, given research showing that older women are demonstrably more conservative than their younger counterparts (Norris 1993, 134). A second group of influences on the gender gap is labelled 'situational constraints,' and includes such factors as marital situation, and responsibility for child rearing. These influences are controlled for by the inclusion of a factor tapping the respondent's marital status. Finally, two other factors are included in the models to control for political bias and for political preferences as the product of economic performance, not leader evaluation. The first, measuring the party identification with the Australian Labor

Party, is designed to control for voters supporting Julia Gillard as a proxy for party loyalty, not leader-oriented evaluations. The second, measuring respondents' estimations of the country's economic situation, is designed to control for respondents supporting the prime minister on the basis of governmental economic performance, not individual leader assessments. The multivariate tests, below, employ this model specification. See the Appendix for details on all survey questions, coding, and scales used in this analysis.

Table 1 about here

Table 1 reports the results of a multivariate regression analysis employing three alternative leader evaluation scales. The first is a 9-component leader evaluation scale, combining respondent assessments of Julia Gillard on all nine Australian Election Study leader traits (Intelligent; Compassionate; Competent; Sensible; Provides Strong Leadership; Honest; Knowledgeable; Inspiring; and Trustworthy). The second is a 3-item 'feminine' scale of voters' assessments of Julia Gillard, based on three measures shown, above, to be traditionally used by voters in judging female candidates (Compassionate; Sensible; and Honest). Factor analysis was employed to produce a factor score for each respondent for both the 9-component leader scale and the 3-component feminine scale. The third scale is an 11-point like/dislike scale measuring voters' perceptions of Julia Gillard.

A number of important patterns are discernible in the three regression models reported in Table 1. Perhaps most important is that all models show women are significantly more positive or supportive in their evaluations of Julia Gillard than men. These measures of a gender affinity effect are net of the significant effects for Labor partisanship and the perception of the nation's economy improving across the preceding year. However at the same time one sees that disapproval of the way the ALP handled its leadership change had a significant, negative effect on assessments of Gillard. It is not clear how much of this resentment is the product of Gillard's own involvement in removing Rudd, and how much merely a proxy for anti-Labor sentiments across the electorate. Importantly, however, these sentiments are evident despite controlling for voters' party identification. Together, it seems likely that the juxtaposing of this negative perception with the positive evaluations for Gillard accurately reflects the 'tightrope' she had to walk in the 2010 campaign between two disparate public persona – caring and compassionate as a woman, but strong-willed and assertive as ALP leader and prime minister. In short, women held Julia Gillard in especially positive regard, despite a pervasive dissatisfaction with the way she acquired the Labor leadership.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 – looking only at women's attitudes – tests the impact of women's evaluations of Gillard (using the 3-item feminine trait scale) on their electoral engagement. Here, we can see that those women who viewed the prime minister positively were significantly more likely to have strong interest in the election campaign. At the same time, however, women holding strong evaluations of Gillard were no more likely to discuss politics with others or to try to persuade others to change their vote, and were no more likely to say they would definitely vote, even if it were not compulsory to do so. Women did tend to evaluate Gillard in a very different way from men. However among women voters Gillard's candidacy did not sustain a sufficiently strong sense of identity or 'empowerment' to encourage their active engagement with the 2010 election campaign. University education and middle-class identity, not women's evaluations of Australia's first female prime minister, emerge as the most important predictors of active political involvement.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 also focuses on the attitudes of women. It shows that women with a positive assessment of the prime minister had significantly higher levels of political trust, external political efficacy and satisfaction with the way Australian democracy works. However having a strong evaluation of Gillard appears unrelated to having an interest in politics. That is the impact of Gillard's candidacy is more apparent with women's general attitudes towards the political process than in various aspects of their active electoral engagement. Each of these effects closely parallels those found by Karp and Banducci (2008, 112) in their analysis of the effect of women in elected office upon women's political efficacy and satisfaction with democratic processes. These effects, overall, suggest that the 'empowering' influence of female leaders on women's political sensibilities remains, in some senses, an internalized sense of confidence, and not a newly energized activism which is played out during the election campaign.

Table 4 about here

Table 4 explores the impact of men's and women's evaluations of Julia Gillard on their vote preferences. Here, employing the same controls as in the previous three tables but minus the Gillard evaluation term, we can see the independent impact of respondents' gender on their vote choice. Despite controlling for Labor partisan identity, positive estimations of the nation's economy and disapproval of Rudd's removal from office, the results show women to be

significantly more likely than men to vote Labor. Clearly, while the Gillard candidacy had important consequences for women's sense of connectedness to the political process, it also had an important short-term effect in galvanizing women to vote for the ALP. This finding is consistent with commercial opinion polling conducted during the campaign.

As Sawer (2012, 251-253) notes, opinion polls conducted by Newspoll and Nielsen revealed a 'continuing gender gap', and confirmed that '[m]ore women than men approved of Julia Gillard'. Conversely fewer 'women than men approved of Tony Abbott' and this gap widened during the campaign. After years in which elections exhibited the last waning vestiges of a pro-Liberal, conservative gender gap, Sawer (2012, 253) suggests that the 2010 election signalled the arrival of a 'modern gender gap' with women more often voting 'to the left of men'.[4] In sum, it seems likely that the razor-edged 2010 election was decided by women whose preference for Gillard made the difference for Labor.

In the end, it is important to remember that elections are won or lost on the basis of the relatively tiny margins in the electoral centre that divide the two main parties. Parties must entice voters across from their rival's ranks whilst retaining those of their own who might otherwise defect. The models reported in columns two and three examine the difference between men and women in vote switching to and from Labor between the 2007 and 2010 federal elections. Here we can see that women were significantly more likely than men to switch to Labor. At the same time, though, women were not significantly less likely than men to switch from the ALP to another party in 2010: a simple crosstabulation of gender by vote switching away from Labor confirms that a greater percentage of men (13.3%) than women (10.9%) swapped from Labor to another party in 2010. All told Gillard's electoral value to the ALP seems clear cut. Controversy may have surrounded her 'assassination' of Rudd. But in 2010 Gillard had a positive, and likely decisive, impact upon the ALP's electoral fortunes. In contesting the prime ministership she also prompted significant increases in women's political sense of political connectedness. In both respects, the high-profile candidacy of Australia's first female prime minister and major party leader must be seen as having a significant effect on the nature of the gender gap in Australia and on the promotion of women's sense of political involvement.

[4] A left-of-centre gender gap in the United States was first detected in the 1970s and became consistently evident in the 1980s (see, for example, Miller 1988). A number of other studies have explored the rise of a progressive gap in voting patterns in other industrial societies (see, for example, Welch and Thomas 1988; Norris and Lovenduski 1993). Still other research has suggested a new, progressive gender gap is more likely to be evident in a handful of key social policies, and in attitudes toward war and military force, than in electoral preferences for political parties (Studlar, McAllister and Hayes, 1998, 783; Denemark 2004, 5-6). Social concerns, especially the family, education and health have been shown to be key focal points for women politicians' roles and voters' assessments (Norris and Lovenduski 1989; Thomas 1991).

6. Conclusion

Julia Gillard's historic candidacy in 2010 confirms several important elements of gender theory about the role of high-profile female leaders on women's political attitudes and behaviour, including the yet to be settled 'question of whether voter bias exists toward female politicians' (Fulton 2012, 303). First, despite the 'tightrope' that a woman leader must walk between voters' expectations that a woman should not be 'power-seeking' and yet provide competent, self-assured leadership, our findings suggest that voters' positive assessments of Gillard, in the main, more than counterbalanced their suspicions of her as an inappropriately combative female. While Australian voters remained disapproving of the way Gillard and the Labor caucus deposed Kevin Rudd from the prime ministership, women in particular were enthused by her candidacy. The net result in terms of women's sense of political efficacy, trust and satisfaction, was clear cut.

Similarly, in terms of her electoral impact, Gillard secured a gender affinity effect. She won Labor more votes than she lost it – vital in a close-fought ballot that took weeks of post-election preference counting to decide. Altogether, the findings here support the notion that women in high-profile, national leadership positions – even in parliamentary systems in which party leaders are not directly elected – can 'empower' women and generate a heightened sense of involvement with the political process (Atkeson 2003, 1051), affecting vote preferences, at least in the short term. They broadly confirm the 'gender identity' model (Plutzer and Zipp 1996, 42), and the argument that women leaders can have a pervasive and salutary impact on women's sense of political inclusion. At the same time, while it seems clear that Gillard's ongoing incumbency as the nation's prime minister fuelled a sense that politics is no longer 'just a man's game' (Karp and Banducci 2008, 106), her inevitable involvement in the cut and thrust of power politics may also remind women, as did Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s, that politics can be a ruthless process, whether controlled by a man or a woman.

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Appendix

Variable Codes, Scales and Measures

Political Measures

LABHVOTE A dummy variable for a Labor Party House of Representatives vote in the 2010 Australian federal election: 1 = Labor; 0 = vote for any other party. (*Original 2010 Australian Election Study item: B9REPS*).

SWTOLAB A dummy variable for House vote switch to Labor in the 2010 election: 1 = Switch to a Labor vote in 2010 from any other party in the 2007 election; 0 = switch from a 2007 vote for the Labor to a 2010 vote for any other party, or consistent votes for Labor or any other party in 2007 and 2010 (*B14* and *B9REPS*).

SWFRMLAB A dummy variable for House vote switch from Labor in the 2010 election: 1 = Switch from a Labor House vote in 2007 to any other party in the 2010 election; 0 = switch from any party in 2007 vote to a Labor vote in 2010, or consistent votes for Labor or any other party in 2007 and 2010 (*B14 and B9REPS*).

LABID A dummy variable for party identification with the Australian Labor Party: 1= Labor Party ID; 0 = ID for any other party (*B1*)

ANTICOUP A dummy variable for disapproval of the way the Labor party handled the Kevin Rudd leadership change in June 2010: 1= strongly disapprove or disapprove; 0 = strongly approve or approve (*C6)*

OZECONUP A dummy variable for perception that Australia's economic situation was a lot better across the last 12 months: 1= A lot better or A little better; 0 = About the same, A little worse, or A lot worse (*D4CNTRY*

INTPOLS A 4-value variable for level of interest in politics: 4= a good deal, 3=some; 2=not much; 1=none (*A1*)

INTCAMP A 4-value variable for level of interest in the election campaign overall: 4= a good deal, 3=some; 2=not much; 1=none (*A4*)

DISCUSS A 4-value variable for frequency of discussing politics with others in person during the election: 4= frequently, 3=occasionally; 2=rarely; 1=not at all (*A5P1*)

PERSUADE A 4-value variable for frequency of talking to other people to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate: 4= frequently, 3=occasionally; 2=rarely; 1=not at all (*A5P2*)

DEFVOTE A 5-value variable for likelihood would have voted in the last election if it wasn't compulsory: 5=definitely would have voted; 4= probably would have voted, 3=might, might not; 2=probably not; 1=definitely not (*A10*)

EXTEFF2 A 5-value variable for the perception that federal politicians know what ordinary people think: 5=politicians know; 1= politicians don't know (*C12*)

SATDEMO A 4-value variable for satisfaction with the way democracy works in Australia: 4= very satisfied, 3=fairly satisfied; 2=not very satisfied; 1=not at all satisfied (*C7*)

TRUST An 11-pt scale of trust in politicians generally. 10=great deal of trust; 0=no trust. (C1)

Leader Evaluation Measures and Scales

GILLIARD An 11-point scale measuring likes/dislikes of the Labor Party leader, Julia Gillard: 0 = 'strongly dislike;' 10 = 'strongly like.' (*C3JULIA*)

JULIA_FAC9 A continuous variable derived from a factor analysis of 9 leader evaluation components, analysing Labor leader, Julia Gillard (Intelligent; Compassionate; Competent; Sensible; Provides Strong Leadership; Honest; Knowledgeable; Inspiring; and Trustworthy (*C4JGINT, C4JGCMP, C4JGCMPT, C4JGSEN, C4JGLEA, C4JGHON, C4JGKNO, C4JGINS, and C4JGTRU*).

JULIA_FACF3 A continuous variable derived from a factor analysis of 3 'feminine' leader evaluation components, analysing Labor leader, Julia Gillard (Compassionate; Sensible; and Honest (*C4JGCMP, C4JGSEN, C4JGHON*).

Demographics

FEMALE A dummy variable for respondent's gender: 1 = female; 0 = male (*H1*)

AGE A continuous variable for respondent's age. (*AGE*)

HIGHEDUC A dummy variable for respondent's level of education: 1= post-graduate degree or diploma, bachelor degree, or undergraduate diploma; 0 = no qualification since leaving school, trade qualification, or non-trade qualification. (*G3*)

UNION A dummy variable for respondent's union membership: 1= union member; 0 = not a union member. (*G6*)

WORKING A dummy variable for respondent's full-time or part-time employment: 1= employed; 0 = not employed. (*G4*)

CATHOLIC A dummy variable for respondent's Catholicism : 1= Catholic; 0 = any other religion. (*H5*)

CHURCHGO A dummy variable for respondent's attendance of church attendance: 1= attend church at least once a year; 0 = did not attend church at least once a year. (*H6)*

MARRIED A dummy variable for respondent's marital status: 1= married or in de facto relationship; 0 = not married or in a de facto relationship. (*H7)*

MIDCLASS A dummy variable for respondent's class self-identification: 1= middle class identity; 0 = working class identity or none. (*H13)*

Table 1
Julia Gillard Leader Evaluations-- 3 Alternative Models:
Regression

	9-Item Evaluation	3-Item Female Scale	11-pt Like-Dislike Scale
Female	.32**	.22**	.79**
	(.04)	(.04)	(.12)
Disapprove Way Rudd Removed	-.59**	-.56**	-1.65**
	(.05)	(.05)	(.14)
Labor Party ID	.72**	.68**	2.88**
	(.04)	(.05)	(.13)
Country's Economy Improving	.31**	.28**	.92**
	(.05)	(.05)	(.14)
Age	.01**	.00*	-.00
	(.00)	(.02)	(.00)
University Education	.14*	.11**	.68**
	(.05)	(.05)	(.13)
Employed	-.06	-.04	-.11
	(.05)	(.05)	(.14)
Union Member	.00	-.02	.10
	(.05)	(.05)	(.14)
Catholic	.02	.04	-.18
	(.05)	(.05)	(.14)
Attends Church	-.05	-.08	-.14
	(.04)	(.05)	(.13)
Married	.13*	.08	.24
	(.05)	(.05)	(.14)
Middle Class ID	-.01	-.01	-.48**
	(.04)	(.05)	(.13)
Constant	-.45**	-.23*	4.53**
	(.11)	(.12)	(.33)
n	1604	1633	1662
R Square	.33	.28	.40

Source: 2010 Australian Election Study
Figures in the table are regression coefficients (b) with the standard error below, in parentheses.
* significant at the .05 level
** significant at the .01 level
See Appendix for details on all variables used in this table: JULIA_FAC9, JULIA_FACF3, GILLARD, FEMALE, ANTICOUP, LABID, OZECONUP, AGE, HIGHEDUC, WORKING, UNIONMBR, CATHOLIC, CHURCHGO, MARRIED, MIDCLASS.

Table 2
Julia Gillard Leader Evaluation Effects on Electoral Engagement--
Women Respondents Only:
Regression

	Interest in Election Campaign	Discussed Politics with Others	Tried to Persuade Others re: Vote	Definitely Vote if not Compulsory
Julia Gillard Evaluation[+]	.05 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	.02 (.04)
Disapprove Way Rudd Removed	-.09 (.07)	.02 (.07)	-.18* (.06)	.03 (.08)
Labor Party ID	-.01 (.06)	.06 (.06)	-.10 (.06)	.07 (.08)
Country's Economy Improving	-.01 (.06)	.05 (.07)	.05 (.06)	.03 (.08)
Age	.01** (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)	.01** (.00)
University Education	.22** (.06)	.34** (.06)	.03 (.05)	.25** (.07)
Employed	-.03 (.06)	.07 (.06)	.08 (.05)	-.08 (.07)
Union Member	.06 (.06)	.05 (.07)	.12* (.06)	.11 (.08)
Catholic	.04 (.06)	-.02 (.07)	.03 (.06)	.01 (.08)
Attends Church	.04 (.06)	.03 (.06)	.08 (.05)	.07 (.07)
Married	.02 (.06)	.03 (.06)	-.11* (.05)	.15* (.07)
Middle Class ID	.27** (.06)	.16** (.06)	.06 (.05)	.18** (.07)
Constant	2.38** (.14)	2.64** (.15)	1.83** (.13)	3.57** (.18)
n	837	842	827	838
R Square	.09	.07	.07	.06

Source: 2010 Australian Election Study
[+]Evaluation scale used is the 3-factor scale 'Julia_FACF3'
Figures in the table are regression coefficients (b) with the standard error below, in parentheses.
* significant at the .05 level
** significant at the .01 level
See Appendix for details on all variables used in this table: INTCAMP, DISCUSS, PERSUADE, DEFVOTE, JULIA_FACF3, ANTICOUP, LABID, OZECONUP, AGE, HIGHEDUC, WORKING, UNIONMBR, CATHOLIC, CHURCHGO, MARRIED, MIDCLASS.

Table 3
Julia Gillard Leader Evaluation Effects on Political Interest, Trust and Efficacy--
Women Respondents Only:
Regression

	Interest in Politics	Political Trust	Political Efficacy: Politicians	Satisfaction with Aussie Democracy
Julia Gillard Evaluation[+]	.03 (.03)	.32** (.09)	.16** (.04)	.16** (.03)
Disapprove Way Rudd Removed	-.08 (.06)	-.26 (.20)	-.03 (.09)	-.12* (.06)
Labor Party ID	.11 (.06)	.24 (.18)	-.04 (.08)	-.03 (.05)
Country's Economy Improving	-.01 (.06)	-.04 (.19)	.05 (.08)	.09 (.05)
Age	.01** (.00)	.02** (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
University Education	.31** (.06)	.16 (.18)	.24** (.08)	.08 (.05)
Employed	.03 (.06)	-.13 (.17)	.02 (.08	.02 (.05)
Union Member	.05 (.06)	-.24 (.19)	-.02 (.08)	-.00 (.05)
Catholic	.01 (.06)	-.03 (.18)	.16* (.08)	.02 (.05)
Attends Church	.09 (.05)	.49* (.17)	.03 (.07)	.02 (.05)
Married	-.04 (.06)	.13 (.18)	.09 (.08)	.04 (.05)
Middle Class ID	.19** (.06)	.27 (.17)	.14 (.07)	.04 (.05)
Constant	2.10** (.19)	2.72** (.42)	2.25** (.18)	2.72** (.12)
n	841	838	842	842
R Square	.12	.06	.06	.09

Source: 2010 Australian Election Study
[+]Evaluation scale used is the 3-factor scale 'Julia_FACF3' (see Appendix for details)
Figures in the table are regression coefficients (b) with the standard error below, in parentheses.
* significant at the .05 level
** significant at the .01 level
See Appendix for details on all variables used in this table: INTPOLS, TRUST, EXTEFF2, SATDEMO, JULIA_FACF3, ANTICOUP, LABID, OZECONUP, AGE, HIGHEDUC, WORKING, UNIONMBR, CATHOLIC, CHURCHGO, MARRIED, MIDCLASS.

Table 4
Julia Gillard Leader Evaluation[+] Effects on Vote Choice:
Logit

	Labor Vote in 2010	Switch to Labor in 2010	Switch from Labor in 2010
Female	.49**	.77*	-.29
	(.15)	(.25)	(.16)
Disapprove Way Rudd Removed	-.50*	-.60*	.24
	(.17)	(.26)	(.20)
Labor Party ID	3.54**	-.09	-.12
	(.15)	(.26)	(.18)
Country's Economy Improving	.54**	.45	.06
	(.17)	(.26)	(.18)
Age	-.01	.00	-.03**
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
University Education	.12	-.12	-.00
	(.17)	(.27)	(.18)
Employed	-.18	.21	.02
	(.17)	(.28)	(.18)
Union Member	.16	.07	.46**
	(.18)	(.28)	(.18)
Catholic	-.14	-.15	.25
	(.17)	(.30)	(.18)
Attends Church	-.27	-.65**	-.05
	(.16)	(.26)	(.17)
Married	.16	-.28	.06
	(.17)	(.26)	(.19)
Middle Class ID	-.44*	-.06	.31
	(.16)	(.26)	(.18)
Constant	-1.17*	-2.74**	-.90*
	(.41)	(.67)	(.42)
n	1619	1534	1534
-2 log likelihood	1228.29	575.29	1102.39
Nagelkerke R Square	.61	.06	.06

Source: 2010 Australian Election Study
[+]Vote choice is House of Representatives vote

Figures in the table are regression coefficients (b) with the standard error below, in parentheses.
* significant at the .05 level
** significant at the .01 level
See Appendix for details on all variables used in this table: LABHVOTE, SWTOLAB, SWFRMLAB, FEMALE, ANTICOUP, LABID, OZECONUP, AGE, HIGHEDUC, WORKING, UNIONMBR, CATHOLIC, CHURCHGO, MARRIED, MIDCLASS.